

The Washington Post
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USA Today 1-A
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Date 12 Jan '89

CIA chief has leads in Pan Am bombing

By Sam Meddis
USA TODAY

capability and sensitive relationships with nations not previously linked to the Iran-contra affair.

Authorities have "very encouraging" leads in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, says CIA chief William Webster.

Webster, in a USA TODAY interview Wednesday, said:

► Investigators of the Dec. 21 crash, which claimed 270 lives, "already have a good reading on those organizations" capable of acquiring Semtex, the suspected explosive in the bombing, and sneaking it through airport security.

► "Analysts have focused on an increasingly reduced area of organizations and people."

► "Chances are good" that the saboteurs eventually will be identified — but there could be difficulty in capturing or extraditing them for trial.

Asked if Libya — reported prior to the crash to have stockpiled and distributed Semtex to terrorist groups — was suspect, Webster hesitated 10 seconds before saying: "I don't think we're in a position to say that."

Webster also insisted there was no coverup in the government's refusal to release some documents for Oliver North's trial. That decision led prosecutors to seek withdrawal of two key charges — now under review by the judge.

He explained, for the first time, that of "600,000 to 700,000 pages" reviewed, 24 documents were identified that were too sensitive to release.

The documents, he said, identify "live" sources and reveal U.S. intelligence collection

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